

March 2021

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2021 Stewardship Campaign

“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was time for UUMAN’s annual Stewardship Campaign.” I have it on good authority that this was how

Dickens wished to begin “A Tale of Two Cities” yet at the last minute he chickened-out and changed his mind. (A missed opportunity I think!)

Yes....it’s that time of year again – UUMAN’s 2021 Stewardship Campaign has arrived! I’ve never been prouder of UUMAN.

The 2020 Stewardship Campaign was just getting under way this time last year when we all became all-too-well acquainted with a new virus that mutated into a global pandemic. We all had to re-calibrate our lives....and the re-calibration is still ongoing.

I’ve never been prouder of UUMAN because despite the tragic disruption it has brought to so many, and to us, we’ve found ways to stay connected and stay the course in our ministries.

- Our Worship Team (and let’s not forget our Worship Editors) have had to, and continue to, re-invent new ways of bringing meaningful Sunday services each and every week.
- Our Care Circles could never have imagined that they’d be caring for so many of our members beset upon by COVID.
- Our newly formed Strategic PlanTing team is moving forward to build upon our Mission and Vision work from 2018-2019.
- We’ve hired a wonderful new Membership Coordinator to transform those who first came to UUMAN as interested visitors into fully engaged members.
- We’ve developed new ways to connect with virtual Coffee & Conversation, Happy Hours & team meetings.

The list could go on and on.

Yet the pandemic has brought unforeseen challenges that have affected us financially.

- We’ve lost close to \$15K in rental income.
- We’ve lost close to \$5K in fundraising potential. (Mostly due to Coffee House closure.)
- We’ve lost close to \$5K in Premo Rentals due to the pandemic.
- We may lose Premo as a renter as they continue to seek to own their own building and property. (They have requested a month-to-month lease.)

And the pandemic has forced us to address issues we never thought we’d have to face.

- Realizing that it is a justice issue to open back up with in-person services WITHOUT having a virtual option to those most vulnerable to the pandemic. This also applies to ANYONE who is homebound for ANY reason. We simply cannot leave people behind due to inaccessibility.
- UUMAN is essentially out of compliance as an employer. We mean well and we mean no harm but when it comes to personnel issues, we are behind many other congregations on matters of healthcare benefits, disability insurance, retirement funding, etc. Again, this is a matter of justice.
- The pandemic has shown us how PRECIOUS visitors have become. We cannot let visitors and new members simply drift away. (Take one look at our membership book and you’ll see that our membership retention rate is very, very low. We can’t afford (literally!) to let this happen.

Again, I’ve never been prouder of UUMAN. We’ve flourished...gained members DESPITE this pandemic...and that is nothing short of AMAZING!!!

To continue flourishing in a challenging time, I will encourage you all to think carefully about your financial pledge to UUMAN. Please, familiarize yourself with the financial issues we face...and come to know that some of these are matters of justice.

Nurture our spirit. Strive for Justice. Transform the world. ~ Dave

New Street Sign at UUMAN



If you have been on campus lately, maybe you've noticed a street sign for the road leading from the front to back parking lots. Naming rights for the road was a Harvest Moon Goods and Services Auction item offered only in the live auction this year, and won by Doug Wilson. Why "Emily's Way"? Doug explains:

"You could just say Emily is my granddaughter. However, for us, it goes a little deeper. My daughter, Cat, was born in Seoul, where we continued to live for a year and a half after Cat was born. Ms. Lee, the Korean woman who helped with cleaning and babysitting, adored Cat and loved to explain willful behavior with, "That Cat, she like HER way." So, in that classic grandparent humor, often unappreciated by their children, we like to tell Cat at appropriate moments, "that Emily, she like HER way." Hence, "Emily's Way," a perfect street name."

Thank you to Doug, and to all the UUMAN members and friends who supported the auction. Thanks also to Mike Liebergesell for expertly installing the sign. Just like the coveted reserved parking spots, we will offer the road naming rights yearly, so when the "Emily's Way" sign comes down at the next HM Auction and gets passed to Doug (or maybe Cat?), what will the next name be? Start thinking now and who knows- maybe you can be the next "Name the Road" HM auction winner!

~ Laurie Wheeler



UUMAN Sharing the Plate—50/50

Once each month, a non-profit is chosen to receive half of our offering. We are sharing our plate this month with Family Promise.

~ Michelle Liebergesell



Life Celebrations

We want to commemorate the happy occasions in the lives of our UUMAN members and other friends of UUMAN. We are looking for Naming Ceremonies, Graduations, Marriages, Anniversaries, Retirements, and Birthdays. Please submit the information about your special day, in the month prior to the event, to membership-tech@uuman.org

Date	Celebration
3/12	Claire C. is celebrating a birthday
3/20	Marc L. is celebrating a birthday
3/23	Todd W. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday
3/26	Dirk B. is celebrating a birthday
	Lori A. is celebrating a birthday
	Diantha H. is celebrating a birthday
3/29	Danielle B. is celebrating a birthday
3/31	Janet L. is celebrating a birthday
	Stephen S. of our MCY program is celebrating a birthday

A MESSAGE FROM YOUR TREASURER

It is time once again to conduct our annual stewardship drive. This, of course, is a necessary part of the life of a congregation. Discussing money can be uncomfortable for us as individuals as well as for institutions so I will be as direct and brief as possible. UUMAN operates almost exclusively because of the funds collected from the members and non-members (friends) of the congregation. In addition, we have rental income and this year, we had a PPP loan from the government.

As you know most of the funds go directly to the upkeep of the building and property, insurance, and salaries. What is left over is used to support our ministries such as Family Promise, North Fulton Charities, etc. The transparent details of this financial information are available for anyone to review.

This year we will not have the PPP loan nor can we depend on twelve months of rent from The Premo School as they are looking to purchase their own property. We also must spend money for video/audio equipment so we can live stream services for the time when part of us return while our most vulnerable members choose to remain at home in the near term. Pandemic aside, this is still an accessibility justice issue. Our covenant should not be broken with members simply because they cannot safely come to UUMAN.

We are asking for a sizable increase in pledges to meet our \$300,000 goal so we can meet our financial obligations, and work on fulfilling our mission to transform the world.

This past year has been one of adaptation and UUMAN has done plenty. We have found ways to connect such as online happy hours, coffee chats, Care Circles and even movie nights. We had our first online and successful Gala as well as a safe, outdoor, in person Winter Solstice Celebration. Inspiring Sunday morning services have brought us twelve new members and some new friends.

Our Religious Education for adults has thrived with many new offerings. Our children are attending online classes in greater numbers than they did last year. We created novel ways to let them know they are wanted and loved. For example, in the fall each child got a personalized basket of goodies to welcome them back to UUMAN. Our original zoom Christmas pageant showcased our talented children and youth who are learning the values that we hold dear. For Valentine's they were shown love by so many of you. The Sunday teachers bring talent and commitment that any congregation would envy.

Masked, socially distanced UUMAN members participated in Black Lives Matter rallies, cleaned up rivers, helped get out the vote and safeguarded the voters through Election Defenders.

The pandemic has shown us we can do more than we thought we could.

We have supported one another, welcomed one another, and grown closer to one another.

Help us keep this going and dream even bigger for 2021-2022 by giving all you can and coming to the Stewardship Conversation zoom meetings where all questions can be answered, and your voice can be heard.

Let us build something together we can be proud of for years to come. After all it is the Dawning of a New Age at UUMAN and we need to be ready.

~ Tanya Romine



Do you feel it?

Positive Friction

One of my favorite groups is named *Donna the Buffalo*. Aside from being my namesake and great animal, they have a funky, rhythmic beat with a side of Cajun to their music. One of their songs is called *Positive Friction* (hear it on Spotify) and it speaks to the emergence of a new world. Becoming 'natural' once again.

Optimistically, I call the vibe we are in these days "*Positive Friction*". Facades have fallen. Pretenses are no longer kept up. Opportunities abound. We are who we are. Connections and relationships are paramount. They are the currency of this new chaotic world, and can most accurately foretell the future of our tomorrow.

What of these relationships at UUMAN? Who do you regularly engage at UUMAN? Do you reach outside your normal 5 or 10 or 15 people to see what others are doing/thinking/feeling?

There is a certain vibe, circulating in the air
Cast from all the energy that emanates from everywhere
Ah, such a lovely truth
Beginning to unfold
It's our brothers and sisters
All coming in from the cold... **Natural once again**

There's a family growing
I've seen it with my own two eyes
There's something that we're all knowing
I hope its spreading like a wild fire
Back to a place one might call home

Here's to becoming natural once again, coming home to a new UUMAN, when the time is right, a Human UUMAN, a fun UUMAN, a bold UUMAN, a connected UUMAN. Just you and me being natural, once again.

Members, to make connections easier at UUMAN, install the ICON app. All members contact information is there and is kept up to date. No more making three phone calls to get the phone number you want! Send a note to membership-tech@uuman.org with "Requesting ICON access" in the subject line. There is a password involved and you can have the app on your phone. Happy connecting!

~ Donna Melcher

Humans at UUMAN...let's get to know each other even better

Jim Nickens and Tanya Romine

Q: Can you please introduce yourselves to all the people at UUMAN who may not have had the pleasure of meeting you?

Jim and I came to UUMAN 6 years ago and just had our 5th Anniversary of membership.



We live in Alpharetta with our two daughters, Veronica is our 12 year old who is a Terrier Mix and Olivia. Olivia is a nine year old Chihuahua who had her own wardrobe. :D



We are both in the new home construction industry working with builders. Jim sells low voltage and security systems and I am involved in all flooring needs. It keeps us very busy especially when the market is as busy as it is right now.

Q: I know that many people reading this actually attended your wedding at UUMAN but for those that did not could you tell us about how you two came to be together.

We met in October 2012. Jim had moved to Alpharetta via Tampa that August. I was a widow and Jim had been divorced for some time and we actually found each other through OK Cupid. It was an election year and we quickly learned we were like minded watching debates together. Our first meeting was at Einstein's bagels. We were comfortable enough with each other that we ventured to downtown Alpharetta to walk around and enjoyed the festival. We shared laughs and chocolate bread purchased at the festival. Jim says he hooked me with the chocolate bread. He might have a point there.

Our wedding on May 5, 2018 was spectacular and such a lovely day. Sharing it with all our friends at UUMAN was such a delight. For those who were not with us, it was Derby day and everyone dressed in Derby attire. So much fun and very magical.



Q: Tanya, you primarily devote much time to the financial health of the congregation and Jim you are very active in the Worship Ministry but can you tell us other roles that you have played and which ones were the most rewarding? Have you ever said "NEVER again"?

When we joined we dove in and became very active and have continued our service work. Jim has been on the Board as Special Projects Trustee and I am currently the Treasurer. We have been active with Family Promise, the Equal Justice Initiative, our Care Circle, the Talent Show, Under the Harvest Moon Goods and Services Auction.

Our Social Justice Ministry is our most rewarding work. Family Promise is amazing. The families UUMAN helps are lovely. You want to just give and give to help them out as much as possible. Enjoying dinner and conversation is delightful. The children are the most loving and huggable children we have ever met.

When we took the trip with everyone to Montgomery, AL to visit EJI's Legacy Museum and The National Memorial for Peace and Justice it was life changing. Collecting soil where Mr. Robinson was a lynching victim for the Community Remembrance Project was so very humbling.

Participating in MLK day marches and interfaith activities with other congregations have been wonderful as well.

We encourage everyone to become involved, consider a Board position. It would be great if everyone was involved and ready to step up into leadership. I don't believe either of us would ever say "never again" if there was a need. We will always be active but would like to be involved in new initiatives. If more people became involved it would afford us and others the opportunity to spread our wings and UUMAN would not have to ask us to play the same roles again.

Q: Please share your hopes and dreams for the future?

We think there are so many people who would love to join us but just don't know that we

are here and who we are. Our dream is to find a way to get the word out.

Humans at UUMAN...let's get to know each other even better

Our Junior Youth (5th-7th graders) are very lucky to be led by a very talented teaching team. They are Elizabeth Rohan, Merri Beth Stephens & Mike Chambers. They seem to be learning a lot within a joyful atmosphere. As busy as they each are, they agreed to answer some questions so people could get to know them better.

Q. Merri Beth, Elizabeth, Mike: Please introduce yourselves to the UUMAN community especially to newer members who may never have met you. Let us know how long you have been here and who makes up your home family?



I am Merry Beth Stephens, formerly known as Merri Beth Stephens (it's a long story.) I have been at UUMAN since November 1992, and I joined in May 1993. I have a spouse, Don Stephens, and a Treeing Walker Coonhound, Kattie Scarlet, all living in the same home as I do.

I am Elizabeth Rohan. Stephen and I joined UUMAN right around the time when Raffaella was born, which makes it easy to know how many years we've been here: 17. Our daughter is Raffaella, and our son is Joel, who will be 15 in



April. Many of our friends who attended their baby dedications at UUMAN are still at UUMAN. I'm a member of the choir, and I've held various committee and board positions at church over the years.



I am Mike Chambers. I have been a member of UUMAN for 7 years. This is my 5th year teaching RE. I've also taught Our Whole Lives (OWL), which is the UU sex education curriculum. I live in Milton with my wife, 2 cats, and a chihuahua. My daughter, who

is 28, just moved out recently. I met my wife Donna at UUMAN; our wedding in 2017 was the first one performed by Reverend Dave.

Q. All three of you have very busy lives and yet you bring a lot of dedication to teaching the Junior Youth class. What is about this class that motivates you to serve in this way?

MBS: Watching our UUMAN young people leave our fold and go on to college, careers, marriage, parenthood, etc. has been one of the great joys for me of my time at UUMAN. Our young people model empathy and compassion, and they are wise.

And they love sugary snacks!*

ER: These lines from a Whitney Houston song sum it up for me:

"I believe the children are our future. Teach them well and let them lead the way. Show them all the beauty they possess inside." I've taught a lot of courses throughout my career, and these interactions and relationships have given me hope for the future. The same has been true with teaching Junior Youth. Our class shows up. Online. During COVID. They participate. They care about each other. And I think they may even enjoy it sometimes. :) I look forward to our class every week.

MC: I've worn several volunteer hats at UUMAN, but teaching our kids is my favorite job. They're just so smart, and funny, and genuine—and so important.

Q. If you like could you please share how COVID-19 has impacted you personally?

MBS: I have recovered from Covid, and I am thankful it wasn't worse. I was sick for two weeks and am still a little weak. But I'm happy I am so much better. Also, I deal with Covid every day at work, because I am the HR Director for a manufacturing company that was deemed an essential infrastructure industry. Twenty-seven of my coworkers have now recovered from Covid, and we have closed our factory a few times for quarantining. Watching our people wear masks in an un-air-conditioned factory in July and August was heartbreaking.

ER: I work at CDC, so COVID has drastically changed what I work on every day, and I'm the busiest I've ever been. It's taking its toll. But the saddest way COVID has affected me was that my stepfather was terminally ill over the summer, and we couldn't be there with him or my mother. Thank goodness for FaceTime, but it doesn't make up for the hugs and kisses we all needed. Also, I'm sad for my kids because even though they are in school (with masks and distance), the stress of whether they will bring COVID home to their parents is always with them. It's hard to know they carry that burden, and I'm sad for them that they've lost out on high school experiences they were really looking forward to. There has been a lot of grief and loss. I'm tired.

Q. We have been talking about love a lot lately so can you tell us what you love most about UUMAN?

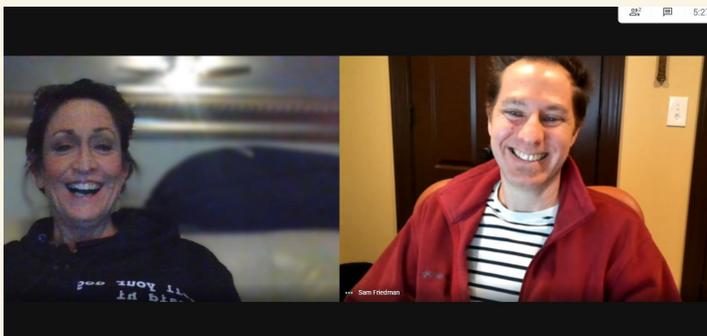
MBS: I love that I can participate at UUMAN in whatever way works for me at the time, sometimes more, sometimes less. But I am still accepted and loved.

ER: There are too many things I love about UUMAN to properly list and I get too emotional even thinking about them these days

MC: I've worn several volunteer hats at UUMAN, but teaching our kids is my favorite job. They're just so smart, and funny, and genuine—and so important. I try to foster an environment where we're sharing and learning and exploring together. I think that's the best way to maximize the fun and learning.

This Interim DRE wants to thank Merri Beth, Elizabeth and Mike for their dedication as well as all of our teachers. They are truly inspirational.

Pledge and Renew: What's Up, Sam?



Tanya: What's up, Sam? You look a little blue.

Sam: This pandemic is getting to me. Sometimes I feel so disconnected from my friends. I miss that warm and fuzzy feeling of my UUMAN community.

Tanya: Well, I've got good news for you. There's an easy way to renew your UUMAN Membership and reconnect with your friends.

Sam: How? I don't ever remember renewing my membership in the past.

Tanya: Did you know that your annual pledge renews your UUMAN membership. And, our 2021-2022 pledge campaign has just started.

Sam: No way!

Tanya: Way! And, we're making it easier than ever this year. In early March you'll receive an email with your pledge form. You can fill it out online, even on your phone! Then, on March 20th when all the pledges are in we'll have an online Gala to celebrate with our friends.

Sam: Excellent! After this last year I cannot think of a better investment than in the friendship, community support, and social justice we all get from UUMAN. Who's hosting the Gala. Please tell me it's...

Tanya: Yes! It's Kelly Callen!!! And, it will be awesome. There'll be costumes, door prizes, and all sorts of surprises.

Sam: Tanya, I don't feel so blue right now. I think it's going to be a good year.

Tanya: Me, too!

<Sam and Tanya virtually hug then virtually high-five>

The Joys and Responsibilities of Leadership

I became a Unitarian Universalist when I was pregnant with my first child. This year he turns 29. I first joined the First UU Church of Phoenix to help raise my children in a liberal religious setting. My young family moved often and I always found support in each UU church we joined. The children were involved in RE, and I volunteered in various capacities.

I have always been active at church, but I always chose the path guided by my heart and passions. I started volunteering in small roles, later some became ambitious and I even spearheaded controversial ones. As my comfort level and engagement increased, I've taken on more challenging roles and responsibilities. The rewards have been proportional. The last few years I've enjoyed being part of the worship team, but when I was approached to be part of the Board of Trustees, I wasn't really sure I had the disposition for it. But I was willing to dive into a completely unknown task because the congregation needed me and someone on the Board imagined that I might do a reasonable job. This spring I'll be facilitating an online class for the first time.

There are many ways to be of service and to be a leader. Following your passion is a sure way to make headwinds in the face of adversity—such is the life of a volunteer. But there are other ways, some more subtle and surprising. These challenges bring a different type of satisfaction because sometimes the greater good is more important than the individual need. In the end, any community involvement tackles bigger problems, such as racial injustice, voter suppression or climate change.

I encourage any one of you to become more involved in leadership roles to challenge yourselves. Think outside the box and jump in the deep end of the pool of commitment. We can rest on our laurels later (hopefully) when we're old and crotchety. In the meantime, let's rejoice in the sacred work that lies ahead and enjoy the satisfaction of growing this church into a vibrant and engaging community. UUMAN is so worth it.

In loving service,

Jennifer Ratcliffe

Veep

UUMAN/Roswell Community Masjid

Family Promise News

Feel like you are not doing enough good deeds? Do you want to do something that makes a difference to real people in need? Consider joining the Family Promise committee. Family Promise is a 90-day shelter program that keeps families together moving from congregation to congregation until they can get affordable housing. There are a variety of tasks to be done, making the Signup Genius, cooking food, fund raising, making policy, and writing newsletter articles. The committee needs you. Email family-promise-chair@uuman.org if you would like to join up.

COVID has taken a toll on all of us this year. Most of us have been stressed about illnesses, safety, or finances. Imagine this stress and how it would be magnified by becoming homeless, with children, possibly living in your car. Can you afford a mask? Where do you wash your hands or take a shower? Can you make breakfast for your child in your car, in winter? How do you apply for a job or get ready for an interview? Who watches your child when you go to work with you living in your car and schools closed? Family Promise, with our help, solves some of these problems by providing shelter and support for homeless families.

Family Promise's current 3 families are staying in some of the big churches and only moving monthly. There are still things we can do to help. UUMAN recently supported the families by supplying substitute overnight hosts for 5 nights when the Sandy Springs Methodist coordinator had a medical emergency. (Thank you, Jason, Laura, Dave, Mallory and Chloe!)

Most of the Family Promise programs in the Atlanta area closed due to COVID, but Andrea Brantley, the Family Promise director, was determined not to put her families out on the street in the middle of a pandemic. This year, even with COVID, Family Promise helped 10 families and provided after care support services to 7 families.

You may not know this, but Family Promise also assists dozens of individuals or families in the community who can not qualify for their program. They return every phone call and every online request, and they help find other resources for those who need shelter. To help families in the community who are struggling but not homeless yet, they provide gas and food gift cards so those families can use their own money on rent.

UUMAN, along with 17 other congregations in North Fulton and North Dekalb, is an important part of this ministry. Our next official period to host families is not until June. We will keep you up to date about how the program is doing until then.

~ Rosie Popp

The Search for a Permanent Director of Religious Education

I would like to announce that, after months of preparation, we have officially launched our search for a permanent Director of Religious Education. The official description and application process is posted on our website, on social media, with the UUA and sent to all Atlanta UU Congregations. This is your official notification and please send anyone you think might be good our way. Here is the link to the description. Now Hiring: Director of Religious Education - Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North (uuman.org) The appropriate applicants will first be screened by the search committee- Miriam Patanian, Jennifer Ratcliffe and myself. They will then be passed on to Reverend Dunn and finally to the board.

My last day, after 18 months, is June 30, 2021 and so we have plenty of time to find the right person. It was with extremely mixed feelings that I wrote that last sentence. UUMAN is a very special place with so much potential, and even in a pandemic, I have had a joyful and fulfilling year. I cannot imagine a more welcoming congregation.

With great affection,

Melinda Mischik
Interim Director of Religious Education
Pronouns: she/her/hers

All in-person Sunday services and any meetings or groups at UUMAN are canceled until further notice. See [this page](#) for more details.

We plan to continue live-streaming Sunday services on [YouTube](#).

March 2021: A Month of Sundays

Date	Topic	Service Leaders
3/7	<p>Calling Myself</p> <p>On the journey to choosing UUism, we all have a foundational moment or series of moments when we feel the call of this living tradition. The story of how I chose UUism, for myself, is also the story of how UUism almost lost me. Let's explore that.</p> <p>This is also a 50/50 Sunday.</p>	<p>Ayanna Kafi Stringer</p>
3/14	<p>The Tao of Yogi Berra</p> <p>“When you come to a fork in the road, take it.” Have never wiser words been spoken? Yogi Berra is perhaps baseball's greatest sage, yet his wisdom transcended baseball and permeated the essence of reality itself. Might he have unknowingly been Taoism's most recent prophet?</p>	<p>Rev. Dave Dunn</p>
3/21	<p>Youth Group Service</p> <p>Come join us at UUMAN's Youth Group presents their annual Sunday service. We probably don't need to tell you but... come prepared for some surprises.</p>	<p>UUMAN Youth Group</p>
3/28	<p>Invisible Trans</p> <p>The Transgender Day of Visibility is on March 31. Why is such a day necessary? What does it mean to be visible? Invisible? What does “invisibility” say about us?</p>	<p>Rev. Dave Dunn</p>

ABOUT THE UUMANTimes: The UUMANTimes is the newsletter of Unitarian Universalist Metro Atlanta North (UUMAN). We go live with each issue by the first Sunday of the month; deadline for submissions is typically on the 22nd of the month proceeding the issue date.

Please email your news articles and artwork to Becky at newsletter@uuman.org